

In the Claims:

1-15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently amended) A contact center comprising;

 a local area network; and
 a first and at least a second switching apparatus for
 connecting to at least one public network, said first and at
 least said second switching apparatus being configured to
 communicate over said local area network and arranged to
 communicate with each other over said local area network, wherein
 each switching apparatus includes:

 a first point of interface T ~~designating-coupling~~ a
 number of incoming trunks;

 a second point of interface S ~~designating-coupling~~
 a number of agent stations;

 a third point of interface R ~~designating-coupling~~ a
 number of call processing resources; and

 a fourth point of interface B ~~designating-coupling~~
 only a number of broadband connections reserved for connecting one
 switching apparatus to another, wherein ~~B~~ the number of broadband
connections is greater than or equal to the number of incoming

trunks T+Splus the number of agent stations.

17. (Currently amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein interface T includes PSTN.

18. (Currently amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein interface T includes internet telephony.

19. (Currently amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein interface R includes conference, recording, and playback resources.

20. (Previously presented) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein said switching apparatus includes time division multiplexing.

21. (Currently amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 20 wherein a number of time slots lots is set such that said contact center is linearly expandable and the switching channels in an additional, newly added switching apparatus are all utilized for call switching rather than interfacing with other switching

apparatus.

22. (Currently amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 21 wherein a number of time slots equals the number of incoming trunks plus the number agent station plus the number of call processing resources plus the number of broadband connections ~~lets includes T+S+R+B.~~

23. (Currently amended) The contact center as claimed in claim 20 wherein the number of incoming trunks, the number agent station, the number of call processing resources, and the number of broadband connections T, S, R, and B are set for a given number of timeslots such that said contact center is linearly expandable and the switching channels in an additional, newly added switching apparatus are all utilized for call switching rather than interfacing with other switching apparatus.

24. (Previously presented) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein a plurality of connections to agent stations are connected to said switching apparatuses through a legacy PBX.

25. (Previously presented) The contact center as claimed in claim 16 wherein contact center includes N switching apparatus, M backup switching apparatus, and means for detecting when one of said N switching apparatus is faulty and for rerouting channels normally serviced by said faulty N switching apparatus to said backup M switching apparatus for service, said backup M apparatus being configured to service any of said faulty N switching apparatus which is detected as failing.

26. (Previously presented) The contact center as claimed in claim 25 wherein M equals one.

27. (Previously presented) The contact center as claimed in claim 25 wherein M is less than N .